

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BAGHDA 01403 200711Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-13 PM-05 NSC-05
SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 DODE-00 /080 W
-----115230 201025Z /12

R 200537Z AUG 77
FM USINT BAGHDAD
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4885
INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY SANA
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

C O N F I D E N T I A L BAGHDAD 1403

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: XF, XA, IZ
SUBJECT: IRAQI POLICY TOWARD HORN OF AFRICA

1. FRONT-PAGE EDITORIAL IN BAATH PARTY DAILY OF AUGUST 16
GIVES PUBLIC EXPRESSION TO REGIME'S SEVERE DISCOMFORT
WITH EVENTS IN HORN OF AFRICA. AL-THAWRA, WHICH IN THIS
CASE IS CLEARLY SPEAKING WITH HIGH LEVEL OFFICIAL
INSPIRATION, MAKES CLEAR THAT IRAQ WILL CONTINUE SUPPORT
FOR SOMALIS AND ERITREANS DESPITE FACT THAT THIS
PLACES IRAQ ON THE SIDE OF "IMPERIALISM AND REACTIONARY
QUARTERS" AGAINST THE SOVIET UNION, ITS MAJOR FRIEND
AMONG THE BIG POWERS. EDITORIAL JUSTIFIES IRAQI POLICY
AS FULFILLMENT OF DUTY TO LIBERATION MOVEMENTS WITH AN
ARAB CHARACTER AND WARNS SOMALIS AND ERITREANS AGAINST
THE DESIGNS OF NATIONS WHICH TEMPORARILY SUPPORT THEM
IN ORDER TO INFLICT HARM ON SOVIET STRATEGY.

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2. EDITORIAL SOFT PEDALS CRITICISM OF SOVIET UNION
WHICH IRAQIS WILL READILY VOICE IN PRIVATE BUT REVEALS
THAT IRAQI LEADERSHIP WARNED SOVIETS THAT THEY WERE
PLAYING INTO THE HANDS OF THEIR RIVALS. "DURING HIS
VISIT TO THE SOVIET UNION EARLY THIS YEAR, COMRADE
SADDAM HUSSEIN CALLED THE ATTENTION OF THE SOVIET
LEADERS TO THAT POINT AND OBSERVED THAT THE SOVIET UNION

WOULD FORFEIT ITS FRIENDLY RELATIONS WITH SOMALIA AND ERITREA IF IT PERSISTED IN ITS POLICY OF TRYING TO WIN THE FRIENDSHIP OF EVERYBODY".

3. SOMALI EMBOFF CONFIRMS OUR IMPRESSION THAT SOVIET UNION MAY HAVE BEEN PRESSURING IRAQ TO CURTAIL ITS ASSISTANCE TO BOTH THE SOMALI AND ERITREAN EFFORTS AGAINST THE ETHIOPIAN REGIME. EMBOFF WAS CONFIDENT, HOWEVER, THAT IRAQ WOULD CONTINUE ASSISTANCE OF AN ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL NATURE TO SOMALIA. AS FOR THE ERITREAN INSURGENCY, IT IS THE GENERAL BELIEF OF OBSERVERS IN BAGHDAD THAT IRAQI ASSISTANCE INCLUDES MILITARY HELP AS WELL.

4. COMMENT: IT IS DIFFICULT TO EXPLAIN IRAQI POLICY WITHOUT SOME REFERENCE TO BAATHI IDEOLOGY AND REGIME'S COMMITMENT TO "ARAB LIBERATION MOVEMENTS". AN OBJECTIVE ANALYSIS OF IRAQI NATIONAL INTERESTS DOES NOT INDICATE THAT IRAQ STANDS TO GAIN VERY MUCH BY INVOLVEMENT IN THE HORN COMPARED TO THE DAMAGE WHICH SUCH INVOLVEMENT MIGHT CAUSE TO IRAQ'S IMPORTANT TIES WITH THE SOVIET UNION. THE IRAQI REGIME PROBABLY HOPES THAT IT CAN COUNTER TO SOME DEGREE THE INFLUENCE WHICH CONSERVATIVE ARAB GOVERNMENTS ARE GAINING IN THE AREA, AND IT CANNOT IGNORE REPORTS OF ISRAELI SUPPORT FOR ADDIS ABABA. AS WITH THE PALESTINE ISSUE, POLICY-
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MAKING IN BAGHDAD TENDS TO DEVELOP ACCORDING TO IDEOLOGICAL COMMITMENT UNLESS THE PRACTICAL COST TO THE IRAQI STATE BECOMES TOO GREAT.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, FOREIGN RELATIONS, GOVERNMENT REACTIONS, LIBERATION FRONTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 20-Aug-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977BAGHDA01403
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770301-0662
Format: TEL
From: BAGHDAD
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770841/aaaabioi.tel
Line Count: 98
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 88c28457-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 01-Feb-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1541865
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: IRAQI POLICY TOWARD HORN OF AFRICA
TAGS: SOPN, PGOV, IZ, SO, UR, XW
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/88c28457-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009